

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Office of Public Affairs

News Media Contact: (202) 586-4940

For Immediate Release: Friday, July 1, 2011

DOE Completes Cleanup at New York, California Sites

Recovery Act funds accelerate cleanup; support job creation and footprint reduction

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Last month, the U.S. Department of Energy completed the cleanup of Cold War legacy waste at the Nuclear Radiation Development, LLC (NRD) site near Grand Island, New York, and at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in Berkeley, California. The two locations became the 18th and 19th sites to be completely cleaned of legacy waste. This milestone was achieved as part of a \$172 million investment from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to expedite legacy waste cleanup activities across the DOE complex.

“Cleanup of these two sites represents important and continued progress in the Department of Energy’s commitment to reducing the nation’s nuclear waste footprint,” said Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management Dr. Inés Triay. “Thanks to the Recovery Act investment, we were able to achieve these goals and save taxpayer money over the long term.”

At the two sites, contact-handled defense-related transuranic (TRU) waste was characterized and certified for transportation. It was then sent to the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project (AMWTP) in Idaho, where it will be characterized for disposal and then shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) near Carlsbad, New Mexico. TRU waste consists of materials contaminated with radioactive elements that have atomic numbers greater than uranium, including tools, rags, protective clothing, sludge and soil.

At the NRD site, eighteen cubic meters of contact handled TRU waste, packaged in 87 steel drums, were loaded into nine TRUPACT-II shipping packages. On June 24, the packaged waste was shipped from the site in three truckloads.

On June 3, a single shipment of contact handled TRU waste was removed from the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

WIPP is a DOE facility designed to safely isolate defense-related TRU waste from communities and the environment. At WIPP, waste is permanently disposed of in rooms mined out of an ancient salt formation 2,150 feet below the surface. WIPP, which began waste disposal operations in 1999, is located 26 miles outside of Carlsbad, N.M.

###